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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/49/L.21)]

49/22. International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 42/169 of 11 December 1987, 43/202 of 20 December 1988, 44/236 of 22 December 1989, 45/185 of 21 December 1990, 46/149 of 18 December 1991, 46/182 of 19 December 1991 and 48/188 of 21 December 1993,

Expressing its support to all countries that have suffered a large loss of human life and heavy physical and economic damage as a result of natural disasters,

Emphasizing the important role of professional and other non-governmental organizations, particularly scientific and technological societies, humanitarian groups and investment institutions, in the implementation of programmes and activities of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, proclaimed by the General Assembly in its resolution 44/236,

Recognizing the close interrelationship between disaster reduction and sustainable development, which was already recognized at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and taken into account in Agenda 21, 1/

Having considered the Yokohama Message 2/ and the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation, 3/ in particular its Plan of Action, as adopted by the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, held at Yokohama, Japan, from 23 to 27 May 1994, and the recommendations and reports of the Main Committee 4/ and the Technical Committees 5/ of the Conference,

Having also considered the mid-term review of the implementation of the International Framework of Action for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction 6/ and recommendations made by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1994 for the purpose of providing guidance for the continuing implementation of the Decade, 7/

Convinced that each country bears the primary responsibility for protecting its people, infrastructure and other national assets from the impact of natural disasters and for taking steps to reduce the vulnerability of populations in areas at risk from natural hazards,

Noting that natural disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness measures can reduce the need for disaster response and contribute to improved levels of safety and that they are essential elements of integrated disaster management programmes,

Noting also that the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World calls for promoting and strengthening subregional, regional and international cooperation in activities to reduce natural and other related disasters through prevention, mitigation and preparedness measures,

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1/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992 (A/CONF.151/26/Rev.1 (Vol. I and Vol. I/Corr.1, Vol. II, Vol. III and Vol. III/Corr.1)) (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: Resolutions adopted by the Conference, resolution 1, annex II.

2/ See A/CONF.172/9, chap I, annex II.

3/ Ibid., chap. I, annex I.

4/ Ibid., chap. IV.

5/ Ibid., chap. V.

6/ Resolution 44/236, annex.

7/ Economic and Social Council resolution 1994/31.

Taking note of the note by the Secretary-General 8/ on the Decade and the mid-term review of the implementation of the International Framework of Action for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction carried out by the Economic and Social Council, and the report and recommendations of the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, 9/

1. Endorses the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation, in particular its Plan of Action, adopted on 27 May 1994 by the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction;

2. Endorses also the mid-term review of the implementation of the International Framework of Action for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, carried out by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1994;

3. Reiterates its call upon Member States, relevant intergovernmental bodies and all other participants in the Decade to participate actively in the financial and technical support of the Decade activities, including those of the secretariat of the Decade, in order to ensure the implementation of the International Framework of Action, in particular, with a view to translating the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World and the Plan of Action contained therein and the recommendations made by the Main Committee and the Technical Committees of the Conference into concrete disaster reduction programmes and activities;

4. Requests, therefore, the Secretary-General to ensure that the outcome of the Conference is disseminated as widely as possible and that the Yokohama Message and the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World are transmitted to all Member States, relevant international and regional organizations, multilateral financial institutions and the regional development banks in order to secure their active and substantive contributions;

5. Encourages all developing and least developed countries to continue to mobilize domestic resources for disaster reduction activities and to facilitate the effective implementation of those activities;

6. Recommends that donor countries give greater priority to disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness in their assistance programmes and budgets, on either a bilateral or multilateral basis, including through increasing contributions to the Trust Fund for the Decade;

7. Calls upon all countries exposed to disasters to take further action to reduce their vulnerability by incorporating disaster reduction in their planning for sustainable development, based on the assessment of risk, and encourages them to pursue the possibility of regional cooperation in the light of the recommendations of the Conference;

8/ A/49/453.

9/ A/CONF.172/9 and Add.1.

8. Expresses its gratitude to the members of the Special High-Level Council for the Decade for their contribution during the first half of the Decade, and invites the Secretary-General to strengthen the Council on the basis of the experience gained so far by revising its objectives, functions and composition, as follows:

(a) It should effectively promote public awareness;

(b) It should increase private-sector involvement;

(c) It should continue to provide overall advice with respect to the Decade;

(d) It should provide substantive support for the formulation of the Decade policies and for the management of the Trust Fund for the Decade;

(e) It should ensure adequate cooperation and coordination between beneficiaries, donors and the United Nations system in the process of implementing the Decade;

(f) Its membership should be based on equitable geographical and sectoral representation;

9. Commends the Scientific and Technical Committee on the Decade for the work accomplished during the first half of the Decade, and encourages the Committee to continue its support for Decade activities, rotating one third of its membership every year;

10. Also commends the efforts of national committees and focal points for the Decade in raising the profile of disaster reduction activities at the national level, encourages them to continue in their efforts, and urges those Member States that have not yet done so to establish national committees or focal points;

11. Expresses its deep appreciation to those countries that have generously provided financial and technical support for Decade activities;

12. Calls upon the Secretary-General to ensure that the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs continues to bring closer together the operational and promotional efforts in disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness, particularly those activities implemented by the United Nations humanitarian and development agencies, thus paving the way for successful attainment of the goals and objectives of the Decade;

13. Invites the Secretary-General to make the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World and its Plan of Action available to forthcoming conferences concerned with development issues for their consideration as appropriate;

14. Invites the Secretary-General, therefore, to ensure the effective implementation of the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World, in particular its Plan of Action, inter alia, through the closest possible cooperation and synergy between the secretariat of the Decade and those entities of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat relating to disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness;

15. Requests the Secretary-General to review and extend the mandate of the Steering Committee of the United Nations for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and other related organizational entities established by the Secretary-General in 1988 to continue to coordinate the activities of the participating organizations within the International Framework of Action for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, and to enable close cooperation between the Steering Committee and the United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee, where appropriate;

16. Calls upon all United Nations bodies and specialized agencies to participate actively in the implementation of the Plan of Action contained in the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World and to consider this issue at the forthcoming sessions of their respective governing bodies;

17. Commends those organizations that, in line with the open and participatory nature of the Decade, have already made significant contributions to the programme for the Decade;

18. Requests the Secretary-General to appeal to all Member States, international financial institutions and the private sector to contribute generously to the Trust Fund for financing the activities envisaged by the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World and its Plan of Action;

19. Invites the Secretary-General, in order to secure the timely implementation of the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World and its Plan of Action, to make proposals to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session on all possible ways and means to ensure the functional security and continuity of disaster prevention, mitigation and preparedness, taking into account the recommendations of the Conference;

20. Expects the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction to be duly represented in those activities that commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations;

21. Decides to convene, not later than the year 2000, a second world conference on natural disaster reduction in order to carry out an overall review of the accomplishments of the Decade and map a strategy for continued disaster reduction activities into the twenty-first century;

22. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session initial recommendations for a second world conference on natural disaster reduction, on the basis of the successful arrangements of the first Conference;

23. Also requests the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its fiftieth session a report on progress made in the implementation of the present resolution and of the recommendations of the mid-term review of the implementation of the International Framework of Action for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction carried out by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1994.

74th plenary meeting
2 December 1994